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ABSTRACT

An experiment using audiotaped student journals for course evaluation is described. Subjects were 200 native Cantonese-speaking technology students taking credit-bearing courses in English communication skills for building. One of the required tasks in the course was to indicate, in their oral journals, what they liked about an instructional module on communication skills for building purposes, and what they would do to improve it. The report summarizes the study and presents excerpts from both students' and teacher's comments on specific module activities, including: reading of newspaper and magazine articles on building-related topics; writing about both physical attributes and building processes in technical writing tasks; group oral work; oral journals; general oral activities; and listening quizzes. It is concluded that substantial information concerning curriculum strengths and weaknesses was derived from the students' oral journals, and that the method is useful for tapping student perceptions that might otherwise not be revealed. (MSE)

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ED 371 630

Augmenting ESL Class Evaluations through Oral Journals

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Abstract

This classroom based action research project explores the uses of student audiotaped oral journals to facilitate module evaluation.

The project is part of an on-going action research project investigating inherent problems within a service English curriculum developed for the division of technology. For this stage of the project, students (N=200), all native speakers of Cantonese, were building technology majors (year 1) taking credit bearing courses in English communication skills for building. Audiotaped oral journals were offered as a way of improving the students' communication skills. All students completed four tasks involving open-ended questions on their difficulties using English. The focus of this stage of the action research project is on the fourth task, "What did you like about the module and what would you do to improve it?" In their journals students offered comprehensive information about what they found useful and what needed to be improved. With this data the module coordinator was able to make critical decisions to further develop the module curriculum.

In any teaching context, a curriculum ought to be developed continuously to meet the on-going needs of students. The most difficult part of this process, however, is the first step; eliciting students' feedback on a module, and enabling their voices to be heard during - not just before and after - a module. If this can be achieved, it allows students time to reflect while they are involved in the process of learning.

On-going needs analysis, by whatever means, is a time-consuming process. Therefore, it needs to be time well-spent. From this stage of the project, analysis of the student audiotaped oral journals indicate that the journals yield far richer data to help maintain a curriculum than conventional written questionnaires or evaluation forms by allowing the students to define the terms in which their learning problems and strategies are discussed.

Acknowledgements

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Aims

To develop an alternative method of module evaluation utilizing both summative and formative student oral feedback to augment the existing City Polytechnic of Hong Kong division of Humanities and Social Sciences' module evaluation

Objectives

To access students' perceptions on the module curriculum

To further develop a service English curriculum so that the curriculum is flexible enough to meet the distinct needs of Division of Technology year one students enroled in Building Services Engineering, Building, Architectural Studies and Building Surveying.

Background

The crucial factor to evaluating any curriculum is whether or not the curriculum can achieve its objectives. If we as educators are unable to ascertain whether or not the objectives have or have not been met, then we are not in any position to make critical decisions in developing a curriculum. This action research project directly arose out of such concerns; the need to evaluate whether or not a curriculum developed for first year students in the Division of Technology had reached its objectives, and if not, investigate how the curriculum could be further developed so that it could achieve its objectives.

In the fall of 1992, I began coordinating a service module called English Communication Skills for Building (see appendix A). The module objectives were:

(1) To introduce students to the language skills they need to study effectively in English at the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong

(2) To develop students' competence in writing technical prose

(3) To expand students' knowledge of relevant semi-technical vocabulary

After every class I reflected on the teaching of the module in a teaching journal. It was through this reflecting that I began the first cycle of this on-going action research project.

Action Research: Cycles of investigation

In the booklet "Using Action Research to Improve Teaching", David Kember and Mavis Kelly describe the action research process as a spiral in which the action researcher progresses through cycles of investigation in order to "make innovations and changes to the teacher's teaching or the development of a curriculum (p4). Kember and Kelly state this process as;

> "One cycle of planning, acting, reflecting, therefore usually leads to another, in which you incorporate improvements suggested by the initial cycle. The cyclic process can continue until you are satisfied that the problem is solved...(Kember and Kelly p4, 1993)"

The point of type of this investigation comes to light through the words of Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart. In their book, "Reflection in the Language Classroom", they state that action research refers to "teacher-initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of the classroom teaching and learning and to bring about change in classroom practice" (Richards and Lockhart, 1994).

For the first cycle of the project, I sought to understand how my teaching and the materials I was writing was affecting the students learning.

First Cycle: Lesson plans, teaching journal, results from the division of Humanities .

In the first cycle, I was confronted with a recurring problem; the module materials were too focused on one of the four language skills (see appendix A). My statement of purpose was as follows:

> "In the context of an ESP class, problems in conducting lessons often stem from materials being too narrowly focused on one of the four skills. In the case of HS0161, the focus was too heavily placed on writing (see appendix B).
>
> Therefore, the purpose of this cycle is to carry out an investigation on how to best redesign the module materials for an English communication skills class so that students can become more competent in the four skill areas, while maintaining basic module requirements, i.e.,writing technical description, developing vocabulary and study skills (Dwyer, 1993 p7)."

After on-going discussions with students in the form of informal student interviews and summative feedback from the division of Humanities and Social Sciences' module evaluation form, and an separate action research peer observation project, I found that the module was not reaching its objectives (Mahoney and Dwyer, 1993) (Dwyer, 1993) (see appendix C). However, the key factor was that I did not know why the module curriculum could not meet them. It was at this point that I began the second

cycle of the action research project.

Second Cycle: Needs analysis, new module proposal

With the end of my first cycle, the focus of my action research changed. After gaining an understanding on the inherent problems with the module, I changed the focus of the project to curriculum development. With this change came new focus and a new statement of purpose. The statement of purpose, second cycle was as follows:

> "The purpose of the second cycle is to redesign the curriculum so that the module curriculum better addresses the communication needs of first year tertiary students (Dwyer, 1993 p8)."

In the second cycle I carried out a needs analysis, redesign the curriculum and wrote the materials. While carrying out the needs analysis on the four streams of students, I found that the module curriculum had been designed prior to the establishment of three courses of study, Building Services Engineering, Architectural Studies and Building Surveying (Dwyer, 1993). The module was designed specifically to meet the communication needs of the Building students (Dwyer, 1993). Yet in the first cycle of the project, I presented the curriculum as if it was relevant to all four groups. This is the very core as to why the existing module curriculum was not meeting its objectives. I preceded to design a curriculum and the accompanying materials flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of these four groups (see appendix D). The new aims and objectives for the module were:

Module Aims

(1) Students will demonstrate confidence as listeners of L2 lectures.
(2) Students will demonstrate confidence in L2 oral presentations.

Module Objectives

(1) Students will comprehend the main points of a lecture.
(2) Students will successfully produce a group video presentation.
(3) Students will successfully practice an individual short presentation based on their video project.
(4) Students will express personal views on their awareness of their ability to use the target language by completing writing journal and self-recorded tasks (Dwyer, 1993 p53).

Third Cycle: Teaching journal, PDU module and teaching evaluation results, divisional module evaluation form, students' written feedback on the module and teacher development.

At beginning the third cycle, I was faced with the exciting prospect of teaching the redesigned module. In order to assess whether or not this new module had met its objectives, I sought gather as much data as possible. The statement of purpose, third cycle was as follows:

"The third cycle will investigate whether or not the students' needs have been met by the redesigned module and how I have developed professionally by undertaking this project (Dwyer, 1993 p9)."

In this section I discussed the teaching problems I faced teaching the redesigned curriculum by keeping a weekly teaching journal. I also asked the PDU to evaluate the module and had students complete the divisional evaluation form (see appendix E and F). Student feedback was included so that an assessment of the new module's objectives could be assessed. However, I still was unable to decipher why the students were still perceiving the module curriculum as only partially meeting its objectives.

Feedback I obtained from students' writing journals came in the form of fragmented sentences. From their comments about whether or not the module had achieved its objectives, I was left with the feeling that the module was only minutely meeting its objectives, but did not know the exact reasons behind the students' responses (see appendix G).

Module Restructuring: technical

After the first three cycles, a new set of module objectives were developed by the division of English module restructuring committee. This restructuring was necessary due to the combining of two modules HSO201 and HSO161 (of which this project is based) and the institutional wide move from an academic calender based on terms to one based on semesters.

The New Module Syllabus

With the combination of the above two modules and the change in the academic schedule came a need for redeveloping the module curriculum designed in cycle two and implemented in cycle three. This sent the project into yet another cycle of plan, action and reflection.

Forth Cycle: Development, implementation and evaluation of the new module curriculum

The statement of purpose for the forth cycle was simply:

> How can I develop a module curriculum flexible enough to meet the needs of Technical students studying for a Higher Diploma in four different streams; Building Services Engineering, Building and Construction, Architecture and Quantity Surveying at City Polytechnic of Hong Kong? (Dwyer, 1994)

Though with the previous curriculum I had incorporated the four language skills, i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, I wanted to balance the four language skills more equally throughout all activities developed in the forth cycle in order to reinforce the students' learning. The purpose was to seek ways to integrate the four skill areas.

While further developing the module curriculum in the forth cycle, I was constantly reminded of two needs; one based on the students' need to practice speaking in English both in and out of class, and my own need to gain greater insight into the students' perceptions on whether or not the module curriculum had reach its objectives. It was from these two needs that Oral Journals were created.

What is an Oral Journal?

Simply, oral journals are student-generated audiotaped recordings based on teacher-generated open ended statements or questions. With each oral journal the lecturer poses a new statement or question for students to reflect and speak spontaneously on audiotape. This allows the students to take on the role of speaker-communicator, and the lecturer to take on the role of listener-responder.

Oral journals for communication between student and teacher are similar to writing journals. Like writing journals, oral journal questions or tasks are set in class by the teacher. Then the students may record when and where they chose. This factor places students in control of the discourse, thus empowering them, and helping them to gain confidence communicating with a native speaker of English.

What are Oral Journals when used as a tool for curriculum development?

Oral Journals are;

> A formative method for collecting data using audio recordings of students' views of their needs within the context of an English communication skills module
>
> A summative method of participatory module evaluation (Waters, 1987) in which students offer oral feedback on the module, its materials and the classroom approach

The Oral Journal Project - forth cycle

One hundred and twenty-four Division of Technology year one Higher Diploma students enroled in four streams; Building Services Engineering, Architectural Studies, Building or Building Surveying were involved in the project. All students were taking English Communication Skills for Building as part of their first year of study.

As the module coordinator, I incorporated elements from both the first and second cycle. The teacher working plan and student syllabus can be found in appendix H. I was not completely satisfied with the results of this combination because I was unable to integrate the four language skills within the curriculum (see appendix I).

The Tasks

Oral journals were introduced to students in the first week of term through their module description (see appendix J) and classroom discussion. They all were told that they would record four oral journals over the period of ten weeks. Though each journal would not be individually graded, the students were told that by completing the four journals they would receive ten percent towards their overall grade.

Logisticly, the students chose where and when to record an oral journal, however, they did not chose the date for submission. This was regulated by the teacher. And in order to manage this large set of data, in each class both groups were assigned to carry out the audiotaped journals on alternating weeks, i.e., group one hands in their journals in week three, whereas, group two hands in their journals week four.

Students were told to speak spontaneously for maximum of five minutes on the statement or question I had posed to them. Individual students handed in their Oral journals to the teacher and the teacher listened and responded to the student's journal entry.

The oral journal tasks were;

(1) Please speak for five minutes on any topic you wish.

(2) What are your difficulties using English?

(3) How is your life at CPHK different from your life in secondary school?

(4) What did you like about the module and what needs to be improved?

Where the first journal acts as a warm-up exercise for students to become comfortable with the medium and the teacher to get to speak to the student in an informal way, the second and third forms part of an ethnographic study to elicit information on students' language needs within their field of study and a background on their language problems.

The forth journal, which is the cornerstone for this cycle, closes the study, but opens an alternative means of module evaluation to augment CPHK's existing institutional form. Thus, the title of this project "participatory module evaluation through oral journals" defines oral journals as a means of participatory module evaluation not an end.

Oral Journal Project Findings and Teacher Decisions for Further Development

The following student oral comments are in response to oral journal #4 (see p7). Please note that the following comments are partial extracts from the students' overall response to oral journal task #4. The extracts have been organised into the four language skill areas as a means of highlighting students' perceptions on the effectiveness of the curriculum. Not all student extracts have been included. Only extracts which were particulary helpful in the decision making process or oral comments with similar points were chosen.

READING

Newspaper articles and magazine articles on building related topics

Students' oral comments in response to this aspect of the curriculum:

1. "If I was to tell you an activity that I really didn't enjoy, its hard to tell you. For myself personally I really didn't enjoy reading the magazine our reading the paper ....and then just answering the key words from the paper and I think its quite boring."

2. "When we were having class, you asked me to write a summary and flow chart from the passage (text). I think it is good for us because it can help us to understand that passage."

Summary: Students perceived reading comprehension activities as more satisfactory in assessing comprehension when integrated with other tasks, not simply locating main points and answering comprehension questions.

Teacher's comments:

Reading, when integrated with an aspect of students' field of study (a flow chart) and a writing activity (summary writing) - a study skill, seems to be a more effective activity to help students comprehend written text.

I should analyze passages from course textbooks that students will likely use and extract recurring stock phrases. These structures will form the basis for the integration of all four skills areas.

Action: Integrate stock phrases, not only into reading exercises, e.g.,jigsaw reading, but into listening, speaking, and writing activities as well. The jigsaw reading can reinforce specific semantic structures and require student deep processing of discourse structure, ie., students must identify the topic sentence and sentences with supporting details for each paragraph.

Readings, which describes a building process used in or out of the students' field of study, can be used as the basis for drawing a flow chart and write a summary of the process. Students may then present the process based on the flowchart and summary (see p9).

WRITING

Technical Writing: physical and process description

Students' oral comments in response to this aspect of the curriculum:

3. "We do the writing for ahh. We do two writing; one is the description of the building and the other is the process description. I think it is the correct way to have the describing description ahh training because it is the because we use description we usually use description as the assignment (for core courses). And umm I think this can umm how to say? ahmm for the first assignment ahh because you can you give many pictures for choosing and we only select one of the building. And ahh for the second one is the process description you choose from IC (Honk Kong Polytechnic Industrial Training Center). Umm I think this two assignment is very good. But, ahh but ahh, for the, ahh I think that it can be it must be ahh, how do you say is? retained for the next course."

Summary: Architectural and Building students were perceiving the physical description and the process description with equal importance, whereas, the Building Service Engineering students did not find the first assignment as relevant as the second.

Teacher's comment:

These two activities are last remnants of the old course material which had been specifically designed for Building students.

This fact is reinforced by the Architectural studies and Building students finding the first assignment effective and the Surveying, Services Engineering students finding the assignment not effective in improving their technical writing skills.

The first assignment and it's activities should be designed so that students choose the topic area in which they wish to write on. This will bring an air of authenticity and motivation to the assignment and also help to further integrate the curriculum.

Action: Writing assignments will be based on student generated material which is course specific (see p11).

SPEAKING

Group Work

Students' oral comments on this aspect of the curriculum:

4. "Several chance to speak with a partner can improve my speaking skill. I'm not scared to speak with people with English. I do liked most was to discuss with the partner."

5. "I think its very good during this time we are doing the assignment without pressure. It is very free. I can make me try my best to talk what he likes. It is very helpful to them."

6. "In the English course the most dislike activity is the group discussion which is very time consuming and seen to be no use because our group members will use Cantonese, not English to communicate with each other."

Summary: Some students expressed the need for the module teachers to "force" others to speak in English during group work and "prohibit them from speaking Cantonese" But they were also expressing how relaxed, "free" they felt.

Teacher's comment:

One of the module objectives is to develop the students' confidence when speaking the English language because, from my past experience working with these students, they have little confidence probably due to the fact that they have not had the opportunity to use the target language (English) in meaningful activities.

Action: Before putting students into groups, the teacher should constantly remind students that group work is an opportunity for them to practice communicating in English.

Students' oral comments:

7. "It is very useful to improve my oral English and I have never done before. But I think I have not enough for this practice, so I should practice more of this in the future. My favourite thing is using a tape to improve my oral English, but if this assignment will not be take a mark, I will have not a great pressure before I speak because when I speak English it is very bad."

8. "I think this oral recording and not so useful in practice speaking English but we can have more communication between us because you can listen to our speaking our we can say something about us then you can know the individual student's problems.

Summary: Students were perceiving tapes as a way to develop their speaking skills, but feeling short changed. The tasks involved time, thought and trust on their part.

Teacher's comment:

Oral journals should be integrated with the other skill areas by developing them into speaking and listening activities which can then be used to form the basis of both writing assignments. In doing so, the writing assignment could be directly related to the students' field of study.

Action: For their 1st and 2nd oral journal, students will be asked to speak spontaneously for five minutes describing one aspect of the physical environment of the campus (journal #1) and to describe a Building process, in context with the campus (journal #2) from the point of view of their field of study.

Students then bring oral journal #1 or #2 to the following session and exchange their tape with a partner. The partner listens to the tape, takes notes and then physically goes to the location to make his/her own observations, all of which forms the basis for their two written assignments.

Retain oral journal #4.

SPEAKING

General feedback

Students' oral comments:

9. "I think if some student presentation in the class, I think this can give a chance for the student for a practical their oral and have them a great confidence in speaking English. "

10. "For the speaking, I think in the lesson we need more practice on speaking, for example, we can talk with our classmate and discuss something and give some idea for any topic and discuss in the lesson. I think our English can be improved speaking English can be improved much"

Summary: Students thought there should be more opportunities to practice speaking in the context of Building and that a presentation could be added as a component of the module.

Teacher's comment:

Since presentations are a component of students' core course of study, setting aside class time toward the end of the semester, where the students can work on developing, practising and giving a presentation based on a topic in their field of study, might help them to feel more confident when they inevitably have to present in their second and third year core courses.

Guiding the students through the various stages of developing, practising and presenting a presentation may help them to feel more confident when faced with presenting in front of an audience.

One common denominator for all groups is that they must all know how to discuss a one storey house from the perspective of their field of study. Thus this presentation will directly relate to their course objectives, as well as the module objectives because the students will all have to communicate information about the dream house using technical description, i.e., physical and process. This can be the teacher's ultimate test as to whether or not the module has achieved it objectives.

Action: From week 6 on, students will be asked to present based on a classroom activity. The last four weeks will be set aside for the students to present a one-storey dream house from the perspective of their field of study.

LISTENING

Quiz #1 and #2

Students' oral comments:

11. "In the listening we will do two listening quiz ah in a task and I think the first one is most difficult. Because ah you know this is the first one is only the true or false question. So if you are luckya you can get more correct. Umm I recommend for you not to use this or not to use only the true or false for the quiz because umm it doesn't test wholly aymy no, it doesn't test umm the true, or the what ah? How do you say is the t doesn't test the student (student pauses tape)... "Sometimes if you only get two answer one is the true, one is false, the correct is half half, the probability is half half. So it think it doesn't test the student true. How do you say is? It doesn't test the student. But for the second listening quiz, I think its just it's can test the what the ability of the how do you say is? the true ability of the listening of the student. Why I say this is? Because no if you can't listening if you can't listening anything you can't write anything. How to say? It's the true ability what you listen is what you write. So I think it's the is the true, I think it is the better way to test it to test listening."

Teacher's comment:

The first quiz was obliviously perceived as being unsuccessful in testing listening comprehension. Maybe I was too focused on a micro level listening problem for Cantonese students; the inability to distinguish final consonants, The second quiz was perceived to be effective because it was integrated with more tasks which were challenging the students on a macro listening level while being vocationally related their various fields of study.

Action:

Redesign the first quiz into a cloze exercise, summary writing activity and retain the second. Keep all build-up activities for both quizzes.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students Suggestions on How to Improve the Course

Students' oral comments

12. "Increase the times for listening and speaking because this is a English communication course. Most important is speaking and listening. Therefore this is a very good course for students to improve their English communication skill."

13. "I think there should be conversations between the tutors and the students because the students can reply directly also it is useful for the students and the

tutor can know what the students needs."

14. If I as the instructor, I think I should reserve a little time for the instructor to speak English with me."

Summary: On the whole the students' oral comments about the module were positive and interspersed helpful insights when they felt an activity was not effective. Any negative comments often focused on the feeling bored during classtime and mentioned the need for more communicative "games" to keep students attention.

Teachers comment: Games should be designed so that the get the students using the semantic structures needed to carryout other classroom activities.

Action: Design communicative language games in which students may generate vocabulary they will use in other classroom activities, e.g., ESL index card games for vocabulary building.

How effective are oral journals as a means of augmenting institutional module evaluation forms?

Oral journals are effective in augmenting institutional evaluation forms because they allow the teacher access into comprehensive data about students' needs within any given teaching context. In this way, oral journals can become an oral record of students' perceptions to augment institutional evaluation forms or questionnaires. This oral record (see appendix ?) can become a permanent part of the division's module file for future module coordinators to better understand the needs of this diverse group or any other group of students.

Oral journals are also useful because they help break down traditional barriers to allow educators access into students' perceptions that may have otherwise been left untapped or internalized. For a module evaluation, most of the real evaluating happens between students outside of class. It is the students who discuss a module between themselves in social settings. This type of discourse is seldom accessed by teachers because they have not been allowed entry into this bastion of social discourse - peer conversation.

Unlike module evaluations, oral journals are not yet another writing assignment which could be viewed as being institutional related. They are posed as communicative activities which involve trust, time and personal investment from both interlocutors. By building up trust and having the students invest more thought into each oral journal, students begin to perceive the oral journal process as being closer related to social discourse rather than another assignment. These factors alone allow for a wealth of data concerning students' perceptions on a module curriculum.

How has the project met its objectives?

In terms of the project meeting its objectives, this method of participatory module evaluation tapping students' perceptions was very successful. It fully accessed HSO161 students' perceptions on the module curriculum because oral journals allow the teacher to access student discourse which is often only communicated between peers.

What this method of module evaluation has also proved is that it was able to provide the impetus for the module coordinator/curriculum designer to further integrate the four language skill areas within a service English curriculum so that the curriculum is flexible enough to meet the distinct needs of four streams of students (see appendix K).

This impetus for change is not based solely on the students' comments, but from reflecting on and making critical decisions based on students' oral comments. From this reflection and decision making, the curriculum is better prepared to serve the various needs of the students, and therefore better designed to meet its objectives.

If we, as educators, do not take the module evaluation process seriously, we are in danger of not meeting the needs of our students and losing an opportunity to build quality into our curriculum. Oral journals are but one step in this process; the key step which is able to unlock students' perceptions about the effectiveness of module curriculum to achieve its objectives. And from these perceptions, a module coordinator is better prepared to reflect and decide what changes need to be made to a curriculum.

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Glossary

Course - the students' major field of study

Module - a class, or in American English, a course

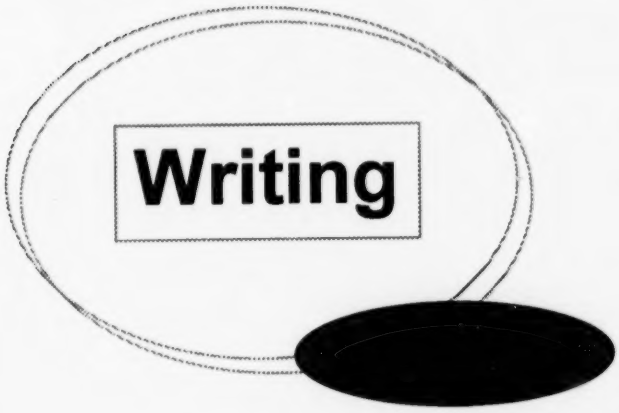
Writing Journals - in language teaching writing journals are student notebooks in which the teacher and student exchange ideas, opinions etc in such a way as for the teacher to take on different roles other than classroom teacher

Appendix A
ENC161 Syllabus

WEEKS/ ****	TECH DESCRIPTION/ **********	SEMI-TECHNICAL VOCABULARY/ **********	STUDY SKILLS ********
1-3	Intro to Module Physical Description: Properities of Building Materials Description of Shape, Location and Layout Assignment 1: Description of Location, Layout and Materials	Vocab Unit 1	
3-5	Structural description Introduction Analysis into Components Description of Connection and Joining Grammar: Stative Verbs, Use of Tenses in Tech Description Organisation by Spatial Arrangement Paragraphing in Technical Description Assignment 2: Structural Description		Study Skills 1: Note-taking
5-7		Vocabulary Review 1: Vocabulary Description, Review and Test Vocabulary Unit 2: (Quanity and Measurment) given for Self-Study	
	Functional Description: Introduction to Functional description Functions of Building Components and Systems Grammar: Action Verbs, Active and Passive Voice Integration of Structural and Functional Description Assignment 3: Structural/Functional Description		Study Skills 3: Examination Skills
7-9	Process Description: Introduction to Process Description Describing Construction Processes and Operation of Equipment Organisation by Time / Order / Cause and Effect Assignment 4: Process Description		
		Vocabulary Review 2 Vocabulary of Quanity and Measurment - Test	
10	Review and Integrated Practice		

Appendix A cont

Diagram of Module syllabus



VOCABULARY

STUDY SKILLS

APPENDIX B

Appendix: Syllabus specifications for EN0161

Module Title : English Communication Skills for Building F

Module No. : EN0161

Pre-requisite : None

Academic size : 20

Level : 0

No. of hours : Tutorials: 20
Language Laboratory: 10

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 To introduce students to the language skills they need to study effectively in English at the Polytechnic at the Higher Diploma level.

1.2 To develop students' competence in writing technical prose.

1.3 To expand students' knowledge of relevant semi-technical vocabulary.

2. Syllabus

2.1 Reading skills

(a) developing strategies for reading technical materials
(b) making notes from written materials

2.2 Listening skills

(a) decoding skills
(b) note-taking in lectures

2.3 Writing technical prose

(a) writing about structures
(b) writing about functions
(c) writing about processes

2.4 Vocabulary

(a) techniques for vocabulary expansion
(b) expanding knowledge of relevant semi-technical vocabulary

2.5 Writing skills for examinations

(a) Assessing the task
(b) writing the answer

Students' Evaluation of the Module: First Cycle

The following information is taken from a division of Humanities and Social Sciences' module evaluation form developed as a means of measuring the module's ability to achieve its desired objectives.

Section A: The Module and Materials

After compiling students' responses to the Evaluation of Module and Teaching form, students stated;

(1) The four module assignments were too much.
(2) These assignments did not further their ability to use English in their field of study.
(3) Module textbooks were considered too simple.
(4) Of all the module textbook, the vocabulary booklet was considered least helpful in that it did not help them to learn or use the vocabulary better.
(5) Students want the content expanded.
(6) Students felt that the module was not very successful in achieving its objectives.

Student Oral Feedback

The following is students' oral feedback which I attained through individual student interviews. From these interviews I found that;

(1) Students would have preferred integrating their textbooks, or journal articles as reading material.
(2) Generally speaking the students preferred to focus their language learning activities on current issues related to their major discipline. One such [illegible] that motivated student participation was newspaper clippings.
(3) Students also said that they would welcome the use of audio or video tapes in class as a prompt or medium for discussion.

When told a module objective and then asked whether the module had in fact achieved its objectives, the students responded as follows:

Objective 1 * To introduce students to the language skills they need to study effectively in English at the Polytechnic at the Higher Diploma level.
The first goal was not achieved.

Objective 2 * To develop students' competence in writing technical prose. The second goal was reported to be successful, though with limited results.

Objective 3 * To expand students' knowledge of relevant semi-technical vocabulary. The third goal was not successful.

Teacher's Impression of Module

I feel the module was not successful because it was too heavily focused on technical writing and not diverse enough with its material to arouse student interest to use language authentically. There was nothing to offer the students

that could help motivate them to use English.

For myself, the syllabus imposed a sense of stern rigidity. This was because the module curriculum, i.e., aims, objectives, syllabus, and assessment were preset and could only be modified slightly due to the eventual required assessment. Module material previously developed to fulfil these requirements has failed to address the students' immediate language problems experienced on an everyday basis in City Polytechnic. Thus, a gulf formed between myself and the students because each had different perceptions of needs; I, from the curriculum and they, from their experience in and out of the Polytechnic.

Being unfamiliar with the history of the module, I believed the module syllabus because it was developed by the "experts" and negotiated with the client department, which was then certified by the institution. I believe the students perceived the English class as absurd since it was not truly designed to address their actual language or communication needs; it is only aimed at developing their ability to write technical communication. Therefore, what module requirements I perceived to be important, and what the students perceived to be important often were at odds with each other. Something else they were reluctant in giving me was feedback. They were not used to this concept and I did not properly model it for them.

Appendix C

Students' Evaluation of Module: After Second Cycle

Section A: The module and materials

(1) To what extent was this module successful in achieving its objectives:

Morning Group

Not very successful				Very Successful
A	B	C	D	E
0	3	10	8	0

Afternoon Group

Not very successful				Very Successful
A	B	C	D	E
0	1	11	8	0

APPENDIX D

Student Evaluation – Small Group Teaching

Professional Development Unit, Educational Technology Centre

Interim Feedback Report

Staff Member : Mr Robert Dwyer **Module No. :** HST0161 **Date :** 30/11/92
Class Time : 11:00-1:00 pm **Room :** P5609 **No of Respondents :** 22

Value of the tutorial	% of Responses
Of No Value	0.0%
Of Little Value	0.0%
Of Some Value	59.1%
Valuable	40.9%
Very Valuable	0.0%

The load	% of Responses
Much lighter	0.0%
Lighter	13.6%
Average	54.5%
Heavier	31.8%
Much Heavier	0.0%

The facilities	No of Counts
Overcrowded	10
Uncomfortable seats	11
Not enough equipment	7
Too hot/cold	8
Poor lighting	3
Poor ventilation	10

The teaching	
Aspects needing improvement	No of Students Identifying Aspects
Content	
little relevance to course	3
assumes too much prior knowledge	2
not relevant to assignments	2
Discussion	
not enough	7
not well managed	3
contribution of students not always acknowledged	1
Presentation	
clarity of speech	2
too much complex language	1
clarity of board writing	6
quality of overheads	2
quality of handouts	3
clarity of explanations	2

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Student Evaluation – Small Group Teaching

Professional Development Unit, Educational Technology Centre

Interim Feedback Report

Staff Member : Mr Robert Dwyer **Module No. :** HST0161 **Date :** 30/11/92
Class Time : 4:00-6:00 pm **Room :** B2510 **No of Respondents :** 22

Value of the tutorial

	% of Responses
Of No Value	4.5%
Of Little Value	13.6%
Of Some Value	31.8%
Valuable	40.9%
Very Valuable	9.1%

The load

	% of Responses
Much lighter	4.5%
Lighter	4.5%
Average	77.3%
Heavier	9.1%
Much Heavier	0.0%

The facilities

	No of Counts
Overcrowded	5
Uncomfortable seats	5
Not enough equipment	3
Too hot/cold	3
Poor lighting	4
Poor ventilation	5
Unsafe practices	1

The teaching

Aspects needing improvement

	No of Students Identifying Aspects
Content	
little relevance to course	2
assumes too much prior knowledge	2
not relevant to assignments	1
does not relate material to previous learning	2
Discussion	
not enough	4
too much	2
poor quality	1
not well managed	1
not well focused	3
too few opportunities to interact with other students	1
contribution of students not always acknowledged	1

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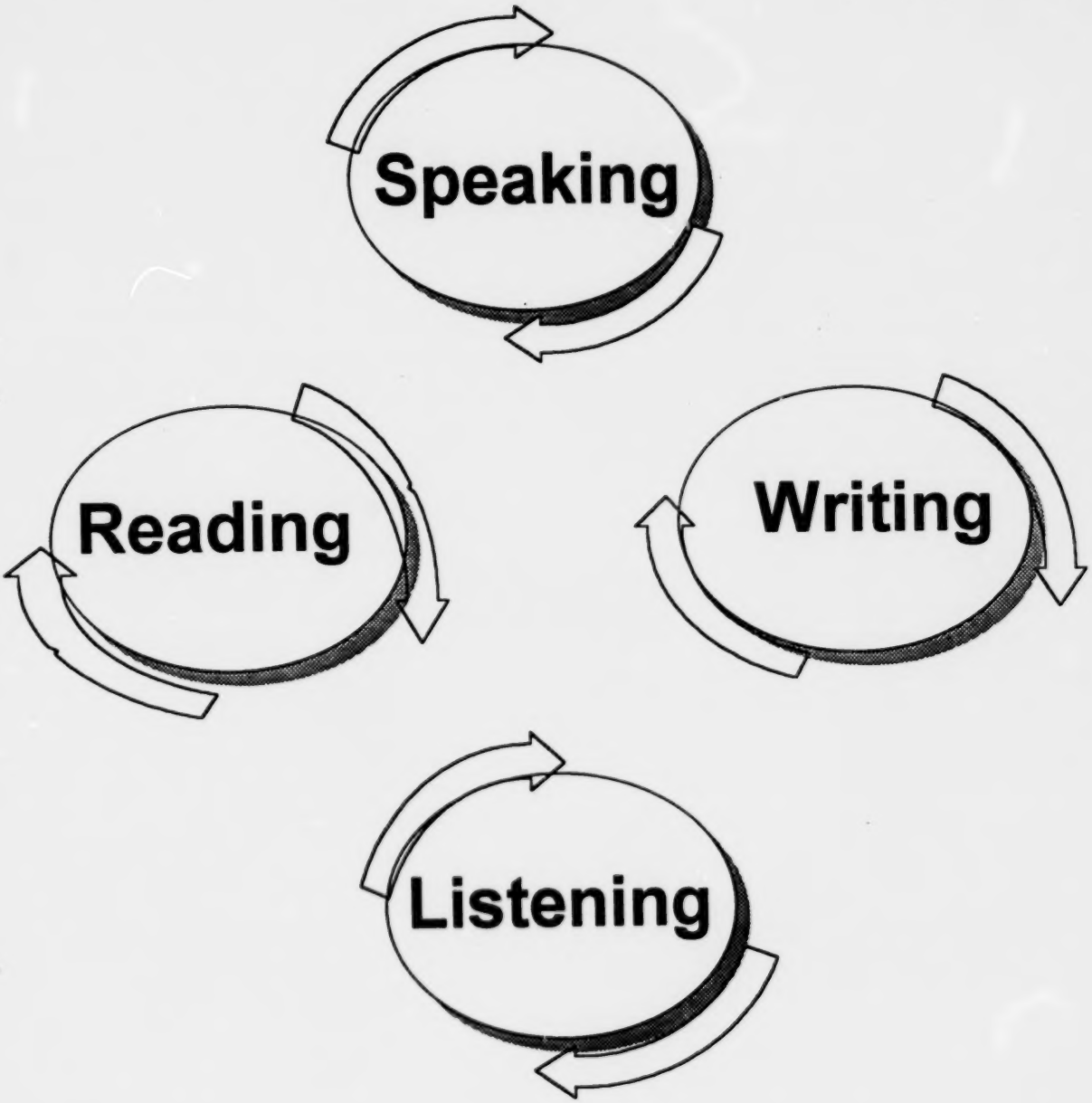
The preceding written comments are the students' **unedited** reasons for their responses to the module evaluation statement "to what extent was the module successful in achieving its objectives": * "Provide more chances for speaking English." * "What's the objective of this module?" * "Good lecture." * "The contents of this module are not related to the course." "The contents of this module do not relate to the course." * "So far so good." * "We can easy to communicate with the lecturer." * "The lecture is very active indeed!" * "It can develop the ability of the student of communication." * "Not many knowledge can learn during the past lecture." * "Because I can learn something in this module." * " Some are and some aren't." * "We do learn something on video projects through lessons, something about communication skills improved." * "Well, I think English takes a lot of time just a few lessons in a module can't show and improve a student English. Remember it is not the fault due to the tutor. I think the student should polish his English by himself." *

"I think that this module want to teach the student how to present the project and speaking English. So. it work successful." * "This module is very funny." * "So far so good." * "Interesting and freedom." * "Quite interesting in attending the English lesson now than before." *


Speaking
Reading
Writing
Listening

Appendix G:

HS0161: ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

HS0161 Module Assessment

Assessment for this module is 100% coursework. You will be expected to complete two listening comprehension quizzes in class, whereas, two essay writing assignments, an oral presentation and three Oral Journal Tasks (OJT) will be completed out of class.

(a) Physical description *draft*	**5**
(b) Physical description final	**15**
(a) Process description *draft*	**5**
(b) Process description final	**15**
Listening Comprehension Quiz #1	**10**
Listening Comprehension Quiz #2	**10**
Oral Journal Task 1, 2 and 3	**10**
Oral Presentation	**20**
Class Participation	**10**

HS0161 Module Description

Writing Task: physical and process description

Objective: to improve your ability to write technical description
to develop an awareness of your difficulties writing in English

There will be two writing assignments as a component for this module. For each assignment you will be expected to complete a draft for discussion in class and with your tutor. Once receiving both peer and teacher feedback, you will be expected to make any necessary changes to the draft prior to handing in the final draft. For assessment purposes, please hand in both drafts to your teacher.

The concept of writing drafts prior to handing in a writing assignment is called "process writing". Process writing aims at improving your writing through reflecting on what you have done well and responding to what you need to improve. Process writing depends on you commitment to improve your writing. In process writing you must listen to your teacher's feedback on your writing and make the necessary changes for your second draft. In this way, you can gain greater insight into your personal difficulties writing in English and improve your writing.

Listening Comprehension

Objective: to develop your confidence listening to spoken English
to make you a more active listener

The listening component of this module is designed to help you be a more active listener either in or out of CPHK and develop confidence listening to spoken English. As all of the listening activities in HSTO161 take place as a part of class time, you are strongly encouraged to participate in order to benefit from the activities.

Listening quiz 1 and 2 will be graded and are worth 10 percent each towards your overall grade.

In all the quizzes you will be asked to complete a listening task while listening to a video discussing a building topic. There will be two warm-up practices prior to assessment. In these practice sessions you are expected to take notes. These notes should be brought to the quiz to aid your comprehension of video.

Oral Presentation

Objective: to develop your ability to present in English confidentially
to improve your presentation skills

The Oral Presentation is offered to improve your presentation skills. The presentation will be given in front of an audience of your peers.

Oral Journal Tasks (OJTs)

Objective: to gain a greater awareness of your ability to communicate in English
to develop your ability to communicate technical information

OJTs are designed to improve the your ability to communicate spontaneously in English. Though these journals will not be individually assessed by your tutor, you are expected to complete them because these tapes will become part of the HSTO161 module material. In other words, if an OJT is due week 4, you are expected to bring the tape to class.

You will on a topic using an audio tape cassette. This cassette is your *"oral journal"*. The tasks will be assigned by your tutor. A peer will listen to your comments. This means that your speaking will not be corrected or graded, but lis.. ıed to.
It is very important that you do not read while recording a task, but speak spontaneously into your tape-recorded without stopping for the time allotted.
NB. If you complete all three tasks, you will receive full marks.

Class Participation

Class participation will be assessed in terms of your participation and performance in class activities. In order to get the most from this module your participation and cooperation is necessary. In other words, this is not a lecture, but a tutorial.

HS0161 Weekly Student Outlook

Week 1 **Introduction to English Communications Skills for Building and Const.**

Week 2 **Physical description Listening task#1**
OJT #1 Make a three minute tape spontaneously describing something, e.g., a facility, a location, in CPHK. Please bring OJT #1 and a "walkman and/or tape recorder to class for next session.

Week 3 Physical description
Listening task#2

Physical description (writing task) Write a description of your partner's favorite location/ thing based on your notes. Your job is not to copy the spoken text, but to take notes from the text and combine them with your observations and put them into written essay form. Bring in first draft for week 4 (300/400wrds. keyboarded on floppy disk plus hard copy)

Week 4 Physical description 1st draft due (hard copy)

Week 5 Computer room writing conferences (venue to be announced)
Please bring a hard copy of first draft plus floppy with draft keyboarded.

Week 6 Introduction to process description Process description assignment set (first draft due wk8 keyboarded)
Listening comprehension quiz #1 *10% of total grade.*

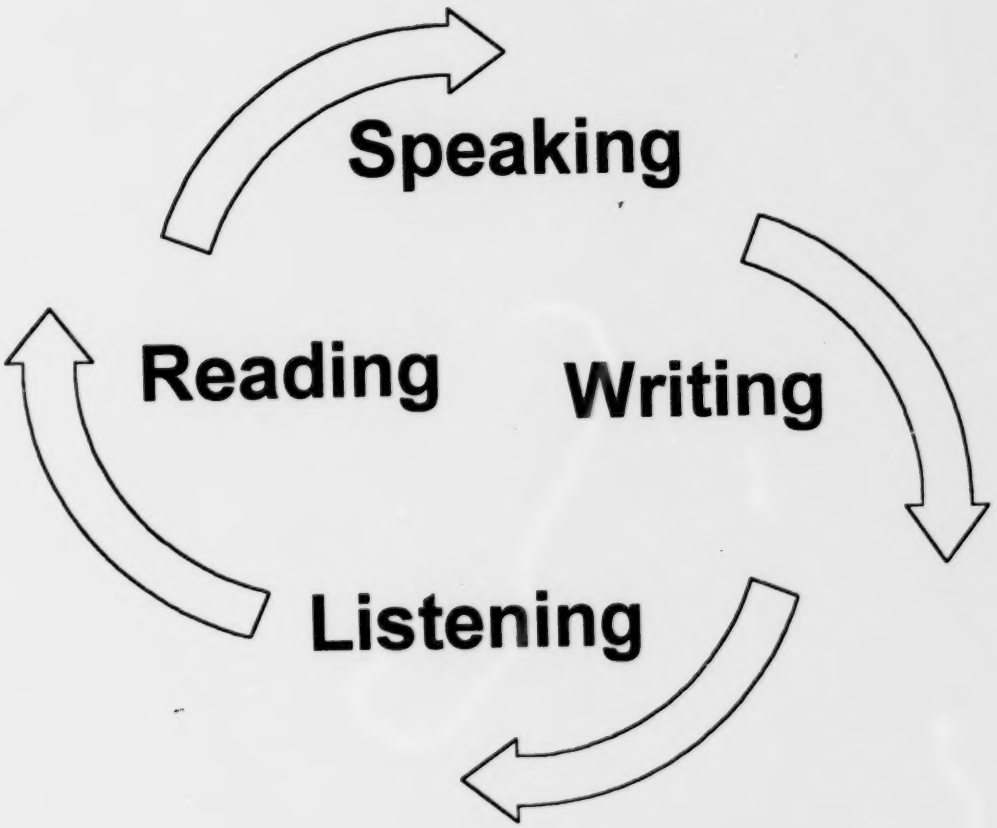
Week 7 Picture activities: Describing a process For class please bring a dictionary.
Physical description final draft due
OJT 2 set Please make a three minute tape describing one of the pictures from class
Process description 1st draft due week 8 (hard copy with floppy disk)

Week 8 *Process description first draft due*
Student / teacher conferences *OJT 2 due*

Week 9 **Preparation for listening comprehension quiz #2**
Week 10 **Listening Comprehension quiz #2**

Week 11 "Presenting Presentations" "The Dam Project"
Process description final draft due

Week 12 *OJT 3 set (module feedback)*
Week 13 *Practice presentations with discussion*
Week 14 **Group oral presentations Class feedback**


Speaking
Writing
Listening
Reading

Appendix I

Section A: The module and materials
Semester B Year 1994 Module no. HSTO161

To what extent was this module successful in acheiving its objectives:

Not very successful Very Successful

A	B	C	D	E
0	1	6	29	0